

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 13-31, and 34-43 are currently pending. Claim 1 was amended to incorporate the indicated as allowable subject matter of claim 12 and intervening claim 11. Claim 22 was amended to incorporate the indicated as allowable subject matter of claim 33 and intervening claim 32. Claim 43 has been amended to incorporate the indicated as allowable subject matter of claim 44. Claims 11, 12, 32, 33, and 44 have been canceled. Claims 13-15 and 34-36 have been amended, where appropriate, to avoid reciting redundant subject matter. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Applicant's amendment of the claims to place the application in condition for allowance does not preclude Applicant's right to file a continuation or divisional patent application to pursue patent coverage for subject matter presented in the original claims and/or found in the original disclosure.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102(b) and 35 USC § 103(a)

The Patent Office rejected claims 1-3, 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 19, 20, 22-24, 27, 32, 32, 35, 36, 40, 41, and 43 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kubota, U.S. Patent No. 6,308,258.

The Patent Office rejected claims 4 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kubota in view of Examiner's use of Official Notice.

On page 7, lines 16-19, of the Office Action dated June 13, 2007, the Patent Office indicated that claims 5, 7-9, 12, 13, 16-18, 21, 26, 28-30, 33, 34, 37-39, 42, and 44 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As discussed above, claim 1 has been amended to include the indicated as allowable subject matter of claim 12, claim 22 has been amended to include the indicated as allowable subject matter of claim 33, and claim 43 has been amended to include the indicated as allowable subject matter of claim 44. Since all the independent claims – 1, 12, and 43 – recite indicated as allowable subject matter, all pending claims 1-10, 13-31, and 34-43 are in condition for allowance.

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The Patent Office is respectfully requested to reconsider and remove the rejections of the claims, and to allow all of the pending claims 1-10, 13-31, and 34-43 as now presented for examination. An early notification of the allowability of the pending claims is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted:

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. BOX 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

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